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## Terms and Relations

Keys to Problem here: The Fantasy of a massively remote - inaccessible to common sense - global history, to emerge as a heuristic through early generations of serious cycling with Standard Model. Toynbee's *Mankind and Mother Earth* in a new heuristic key that includes first and last three minutes as well as, for example, Goudge's gropings.<sup>1</sup> Model-notion of *Method*<sup>2</sup> replaced by come-about, (about)<sup>3</sup>, group climb to remote embrace of finitude.<sup>3</sup> Need for study of *Method*'s two frail chapters on history.

What follows here is an earlier run at this chapter, prior to heuristic "pull-back," but a help to the shift out of common sense, out of the problem of general history,<sup>4</sup> towards the creative global minority of Tower Dwellers.

Back now to a consideration of Doran's early book.

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<sup>1</sup>Stephen Weinberg, *The First Three Minutes. A Modern View of the Origins of the Universe*, Basic Books pb, 1993; Paul Davies, *The Last Three Minutes*, London, Phoenix pb, 2000 Stephen Jay Gould, *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002. I have considered Gould's massive effort (1339 pages) in *Cantower XV*.

<sup>2</sup>See *Method in Theology*, 228.

<sup>3</sup>Just how remote the embrace is to be is vaguely intimated in Chapter 14 below, the final four sections.

<sup>4</sup>This is a deep problem of cultural chemistry that I have skirted past in this book. You might re-read the final chapter of *Topics in Education* and puzzle over what precisely Lonergan might have meant by the phrase that concludes section 1, "The Problem of History": "... the problem of general history, which is the real catch"(236).

By an odd accident the title of this chapter coincides, as I found out later, with the title of Part One of Fr. Robert Doran's large book, *Theology and the Dialectic of History*.<sup>5</sup> As I mentioned in the beginning of the Introduction, it was his more recent book, *What is Systematic Theology?*, that led me towards the present work through the various issues of axiomatics that he raised. That book came into my hands providentially as I finished Part Two of *Method in Theology and Botany*, and I tackled some of the axiomatic issues in the concluding Part Three of the book. Other issues raised by Doran's book were left for later treatment in the Joistings<sup>6</sup> series, but now it seems that some attention to those issues in this odd book would help us forward. I hold to my principle of sketchiness however. Doran's efforts call for lengthier community reflection on dialectic and foundational orientations and my own published contributions to such considerations are mainly in Joistings, beginning with Joistings 15.

The chapters of Doran's *What is Systematic Theology?* not explicitly discussed in *Method in Theology and Botany* point back very consistently to the larger previous work mentioned at the beginning here, and I must confess that until now I had not read that work. Doran's searchings display a generous dedication to solving the problems of contemporary theology. Through my reading and reflections on chapters 7 and 8 I found resonances with my own reachings of the past forty years and his push generates a resurgence of my faded optimism regarding Lonergan studies, a topic of the final chapter below. There is his drive for a genetic dynamic context of systematics; there is his bringing attention to Lonergan's shift in Trinitarian theology.<sup>7</sup> Neither of these have been given serious creative attention by the Lonergan group, but it would seem that Doran could be in a position now to move that group interest forward.

So, when I come now to share some reflections on the other chapters of *What is Systematic Theology?* and on his massive undertaking of the 1980s that gave rise to *Theology*

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<sup>5</sup>University of Toronto Press, 1990. Part One is titled "Basic Terms and Relations".

<sup>6</sup>See note 8 below.

<sup>7</sup>The shift (*De Deo Trino, Pars Systematica*, the closing paragraphs of Quaestio XXVI; see also the end of Quaestio XXXII) is to an elementary systematic perspective on the participations in our cosmic energy-dynamic of the divine personalities. The challenge is to lift it to a full geohistorical systematics cyclically oriented towards, and in, an ever-richer eschatology.

*and the Dialectic of History*, I would wish disagreements expressed to be viewed positively. Doran, as I know from correspondence and conversations over these last decades, is battling against the massive handicaps of theological and philosophical and high-school education that made *Insight* an impossible book for these first generations of Lonergan disciples.

Yet now, the sharing of reflections is in a different context than that envisaged when I began this chapter some time ago. How am I to handle the massive challenge of Doran's *Complete Works*, and in particular the remainder of *What is Systematic Theology?*, as well as the book I have now tackled, *Theology and the Dialectic of History*? Helpful jottings and references seem to be my only practical way.

*Joistings* 15, 18, 19, 20<sup>8</sup> give a larger context of assessment, though of course this style of assessment is to be replaced by the strategies of *Method in Theology*, page 250. And what of Doran's *Complete Works*? Too much to deal with even in a big book, much less in jottings or *Joistings*. I had the privilege of working with Bob during the production of *Searching for Cultural Foundations*, when as a team we worked through what he had written up till then on the psyche. In the two decades following I have read his published essays in *Theological Studies*, *Method*, and elsewhere; and shared reflections with him. But we were on different tracks. I wish to point briefly towards those differences. Part One of the Volume, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, already mentioned, gives me a handy way of moving along if I just take up the first three<sup>9</sup> chapters in my own way: [1] "Bernard Lonergan's Notion of the Subject"; [2]. "The Notion of Psychic Conversion"; [3] "The Notion of Dialectic". [1] is the topic here; [2] is the topic in chapter 10, to follow here; [3] is the topic in chapter 12 below, which is in fact on doctrines.

Let's start with comments on [3] and on doctrines. Doran's central drive is doctrinal,

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<sup>8</sup>*Joistings* 15, 18 and 20 deal with Various aspects of Doran's present work. *Joistings* 19 deal with the weaknesses of Neil Ormerod's perspective as exhibited in the article cited below at note 10.

<sup>9</sup>Part One contains five chapters, and my own way of taking up chapter 1 includes reference to chapters 4 and 5 of his book, which pull in the rest ( chapters 1-6, 9, 10) of *What is Systematic Theology?*.

doctrines especially regarding the psyche and the need for a doctrine of history. But the doctrine on history seems to be the easiest place to start. Indeed, the handy place to start, if I am to stir the waters, is with a work cited already that views positively Doran's efforts in the book in question. "What is required is a theological gestalt, a framework that is at once theological and social scientific. It requires nothing less than the development of a theology of history itself. To my mind, the only successful position that achieves this, at least as a starting point, is the work of Robert Doran in *Theology and the Dialectic of History*. Building on Lonergan's notion of the scale of values, of healing and creating in history (a modern transposition of the grace-nature scheme), and of the analogy of dialectic. Doran has developed a theological construct that can incorporate a reoriented social science into its very heart."<sup>10</sup>

I read this disconcerting article before I tackled the earlier book of Doran, and found myself even more deeply disconcerted when I got round in these months to a reading of this big work, a reading that followed my leisured - and also disconcerting - digestion of *What is Systematic Theology?* The *Joistings* reflections already noted<sup>11</sup> give some indication of my reaction to what I might call the contextualizing chapters 1 - 6, 9 - 10, in *What is Systematic Theology?*, of the two chapters there in which I found Doran reaching forward to a fuller notion of systematics, but those contextualizing chapters were also disconcerting. No need to repeat myself here: functional division of labour was not at all a central issue, but rather this theology of history issue, meshed with value-scaling and a normative dynamics of the psyche. The summary of my shock came in the concluding page with two mentions of things being "in place: "the initial general categories are in place"; "at least one piece is in sufficiently in place to enable us to begin, namely, the basic terms and relations of a theory of history."<sup>12</sup>

This is, to me, mind-boggling. What is in place is the situation discerned by Lonergan in section 8 of chapter 7 of *Insight*; what is in place, dodged by his disciples, is his hard-won

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<sup>10</sup>Neil Ormerod, "A Dialectic Engagement with the Social Sciences in an Ecclesiological Context", *Theological Studies*, 66(2005), 840.

<sup>11</sup>See note 8 above.

<sup>12</sup>*What is Systematic Theology?*, 203.

answer both to Plato's quest and to demands he places on Cosmopolis. What sits there, in a corner of a neglected book, is an invitation that repeats history's yearning fragmentation of group and global care.

The Terms and Relations of History? They are to be in place, some generations hence perhaps, when placed is the searching context of a suffering<sup>13</sup> and humble collaboration that is an eightfold cycling and re-cycling of humanities messy efforts at self-creation. There is very little sign of those terms and relations in the stop-gap effort of Lonergan's two chapters on history in *Method in Theology*. Their more creative source, a powerful globally-integral genetic systematics of humanities reach for integrator-operator, was skimmed over in the discerning minimalism of Lonergan's chapter on Systematics. But the vision of the old minder lurks there in detectable expressions, grown in the solitude of his minding between 1935 and 1965.

At all events, my turning to the earlier Doran work lifted me to new shock levels. I suppose it could be regarded as a popularization of elements of Lonergan's views. But where is the larger challenge or its solution through functional specialization? It is not as if this work was, like the Florida Conference, just too soon after the shock of the publication of The Standard Model.<sup>14</sup> I reflected already elsewhere on puzzles about the minimalization of Core Systematic Theology that is cyclic collaboration identified in 1965 by Lonergan, but this earlier work of Doran does not even give a minimalism. What then might I say about chapter one, other than it seems to be an inadequate summary of the subject's distress, especially the subject reaching for intellectual integrity. The fifth chapter of this Part One of Doran's book comes back to the theological counterpart of the question of Cosmopolis and rightly identifies salvific suffering as a global lift to a crossing toward a second time of the temporal subject.<sup>15</sup> But that chapter does not rise to attend to the major chord in the scale of value that is the analogue of physics global community's suffering into the difficult best of a Standard Model. The major chord is the heart-

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<sup>13</sup>See *Joistings* 8 on the relation of the hodic struggle to the satisfaction of Jesus.

<sup>14</sup>There is the other shock from *Insight*, the directive towards a positional stand. I discuss Doran's problems with this in the next chapter.

<sup>15</sup>Lonergan, *De Deo Trino. Pars Systematica, Quaestio XXI*.

reach for *theoria*, for the mood of the Greek Fathers, for Aristotle's finest way.<sup>16</sup> The reaching hearts of a later foundational community will bring about the "come about" of the cyclic systematics, the Standard Model, that is to generate the ongoing genesis of the sequences of terms and relations that would give the Tower People a slim but "most fruitful"<sup>17</sup> understanding of the flow of energy and human finitude that we call history.

The problem of Lonergan's two major works is the meaning of the little word "so" in his specification of the heart of foundational heartiness: "So it comes about that the extroverted subject visualizing extension and experiencing duration gives place to the subject oriented to the objective of the unrestricted desire to know and affirming beings differentiated by certain conjugate potencies, forms, and acts grounding certain laws and frequencies."<sup>18</sup> The "come about" of *Insight* seems mainly the slim probability of individual climbing, infolding. After fifty years it remains slim. The "so" picks up a new networking of statistical distributions in the intertwinings of The Standard Model.<sup>19</sup>

A recent award-winning film was titled *The March of the Penguins*. The march and its filming is part of history, part of recent centuries of temperature shifts and technological leaps. And there are the flights of geese, the calls of loons, the hovering of windhovers, and the world of words by which they contain us. The containing words of explanatory history are to be the neuroheuristic patternings of the inner words of a Tower Community whose existence is only a possibility of the ice flow<sup>20</sup> of fantasy's folly in the creative march of energy's time.

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<sup>16</sup>See Lonergan, "Mission and Spirit", *A Third Collection*, 27. The Aristotelian text is *Nicomachean Ethics*, X, 7, 1177b 26 - 1178a 2.

<sup>17</sup>The reference is to the first Vatican Council, DB 1796: "fructuosissima fidei intelligentia"

<sup>18</sup>*Insight*, 514[537].

<sup>19</sup>The context of this odd reach is intimated in those final short sections of chapter 14. Curiously, the Goedelian struggle emerges again as relevant, as well as Goedel's later struggles with the continuum problem.

<sup>20</sup>"Yeats told of his aspiration to a form of utterance in which imagination would be 'carried beyond feeling into the aboriginal ice'. Which ice, needless to say, was the antithesis of

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the stuff to be found under the mortuary slabs. It represented not so much a frigid exhaustion as in ultimate attainment. It was an analogue of the cold heaven where it 'seemed as though ice burned and was but the more ice'; an analogue also of Yeats's rejection of the body heat of the pathetic and the subjective in art, for his embrace of the dramatic and the heroic, his determination to establish the crystalline standards of poetic imagination as normative for the level at which people should live" ( Seamus Heaney, *The Redress of Poetry*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 1995, 156-7.) I would note the critical relevance of this ice to Doran's dalliance with von Balthasar's aesthetics (see the indices under *Von Balthasar* in both *What is Systematic Theology?*, and *Theology and the Dialectic of History*.)